

Harris County Juvenile Probation Department

1986 Annual Report



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To the Staff of Harris County Juvenile Probation Department

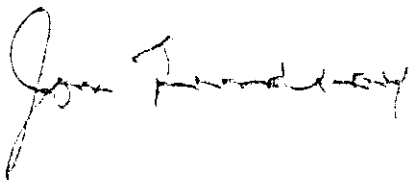
Working with troubled youths and their families is not an easy task. It takes professional skill and personal dedication to redirect a child from a life of wrong choices to that of right choices.

As this year's Annual Report focuses on the lives of three children in our system, let me take this opportunity to recognize and thank the staff for its tireless efforts in providing services on behalf of the youth of Harris County.

Despite an increase in caseloads and budget constraints, the Probation Department continues to develop innovative and progressive programs to meet its clients' changing needs. Throughout this, I see a positive, can-do attitude, always looking for ways to improve.

I take great pride in congratulating all staff for a job well done. I'm honored to be a part of this Department and share in its many accomplishments.

Sincerely,



Jon Lindsay
Harris County Judge



A Message from the Chief

I look forward to each year's Annual Report. Reflecting back over the past year gives greater focus to the direction we want to take in the future.

In 1986, we continued to offer top-quality service to a growing number of young people and their families. We are proud of our accomplishments.

We are proud, too, of the achievements of the children we serve. Most young offenders who receive probation, or who stay in one of our institutions, go on to be productive, law-abiding members of our community. Many do so against great personal odds.

So this year, we salute all the young people you never hear about — the ones who don't make the headlines. This year, we pay special tribute to the children who succeed.

In the following typical cases, we hope to tell part of the story of the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department through the experiences of these children and the staff who work with them.

Sincerely,



John A. Cocoros,
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer



Jeremy

Jeremy is a quiet, sullen boy with big brown eyes. He rarely smiles. He was charged with vandalism and theft and brought to the Juvenile Detention Center.

A Center intake officer talked with Jeremy who sat withdrawn, quietly staring at the floor. His mother said Jeremy was upset because he and his father had another bad fight. She was afraid for Jeremy to come back home, saying they needed a “cooling off period.”

The intake officer decided Jeremy should stay in detention until his court hearing. He has a history of running away and his home situation is too volatile.

Psychologist Janice Gloster is part of the Center's assessment team. Its immediate task was to assess Jeremy's physical and emotional condition and to initiate any needed crisis intervention. She and her staff worked to get him to open up and share his feelings. Everyone knew Jeremy was a troubled child, but no one knew what the trouble was. And Jeremy wasn't telling.

Then, Jeremy took an art class taught by a Center volunteer. Dr. Gloster remembers one drawing with an important clue to Jeremy's problems.

When asked about his drawing, Jeremy admitted that his father often got drunk and beat him.

While detention therapists worked with Jeremy, a court intake officer visited his home and school, gathering information for the court. After a child is found delinquent, the judge uses the officer's report to decide on a plan in the best interest of the child and the community.

The judge ordered Jeremy placed at Burnett-Bayland Home for up to one year. The program is structured for young, non-violent offenders. His daily routine will include chores, school, recreation, homework and counseling. By sharing a small cottage with other boys his age, Jeremy will develop a sense of social responsibility and self-discipline.



“The children's art sometimes reveals more than an interview. In one particular drawing, we found evidence that Jeremy might have been the victim of child abuse. One bruised eye and one tearful eye told us what Jeremy could not.”

*—Dr. Janice Gloster
Administrative Psychologist*



*Everyone knew Jeremy was a troubled
child, but no one knew what the trouble was.
And Jeremy wasn't telling.*

While Jeremy is at Burnett-Bayland, the casework staff will work with his parents, teaching them new parenting skills. Jeremy's father will enter an alcoholism treatment program next month and is already in counseling.

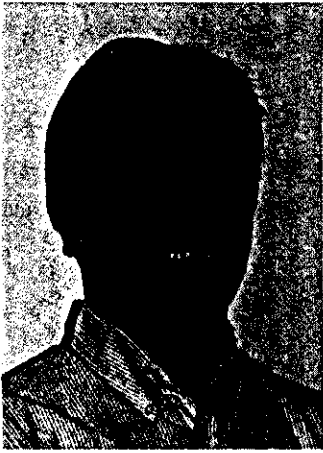
For the next year, professional staff, volunteers and other community agencies will team together to assist Jeremy and his family prepare for the time when they can live together again. A lot of dedicated people are determined to put a smile back on Jeremy's face.

Anita

This month, Anita will complete her term of probation. Ten months ago, she was found delinquent for shoplifting. A lot has happened since then.

Anita is a bright, imaginative 15-year-old. She was a good student until she started high school. Then, her group of friends changed, her grades dropped and she became secretive about her activities.

Anita's mother worried. *"I know teenagers don't tell their parents everything, but Anita used to talk to me all the time. Suddenly, everything was a big secret."*



After she and her husband divorced, Anita's mother tried to spend more time with her four children, but working and raising a family isn't easy. *"When I get home from work, it's after 6:00 and I'm exhausted. I suppose I've neglected Anita without realizing it,"* she admitted.

Anita's probation officer has been working with juvenile offenders for many years. He recognized Anita's too familiar behavior pattern and talked to her about drugs. Anita admitted she and her friends sometimes used drugs and alcohol, but she seemed unconcerned.

"Some of my friends will sniff and shoot anything! You know, at least I know what I'm doing," she said.

Anita was referred to several educational and therapeutic programs made available by the Department. By participating in a series of weekend and evening classes, she learned all about the physical and legal consequences of substance abuse. More important, she learned about responsible decision-making and self-discipline.

Anita initially resented her probation officer's intrusion into her life. Now she thinks of him as a friend.

"He really helped me get through a lot. Me and my mom get along much better now and I don't have nightmares anymore. I used to dream I was locked up in

"These kids try to grow up so fast. Before they know it, they are in over their heads and scared to death. We try to help them gain control over their behavior and to realize it's O.K. to be only 15 for now."
—Donald Camp,
Probation Officer



*“I used to dream I was locked up in a prison.
I could look out and see everybody, but no one could see me.”*

a prison. I could look out and see everybody, but no one could see me. I was so scared in those days."

Anita has done well on probation. Most young offenders do. She has followed her rules of probation, meeting curfews, attending school and staying off drugs. Through the Department's Incentive Program, she has shortened her probationary period from one year to 10 months.

What about those old nightmares?

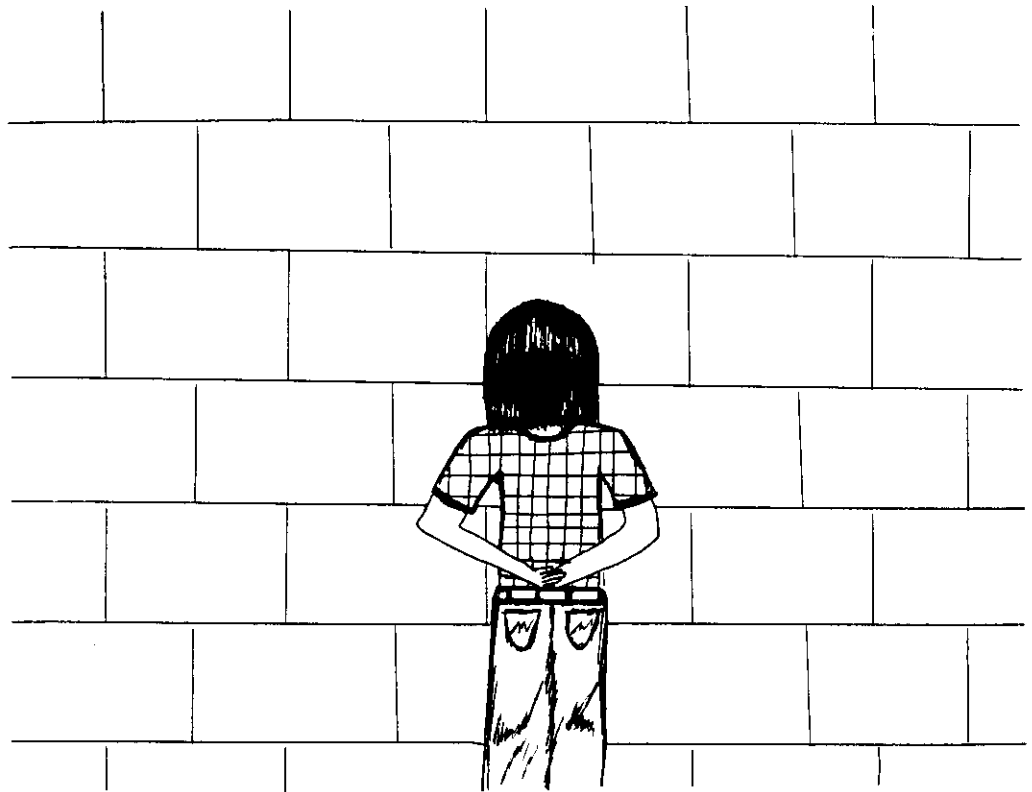
“No way! I’m in charge of my own life now. I’m closer to my mom and we know we can depend on each other. Besides, I’ve got better things to dream about,” she giggles, “ — boys!”

Paul

Paul is 16. He likes to talk about cars and girls and he has some big plans for the future. His face breaks into a wide grin when he tells you he plans to race in the Indianapolis 500 some day. He also plans to win.

Those dreams may not seem so extraordinary for a teenage boy, but they are for Paul. One year ago, Paul didn't plan to succeed at anything, ever. He and a friend were caught stealing a car and stereo equipment. It wasn't Paul's first offense, but we think it will be his last.

When he appeared in court, Paul had dropped out of school. He was unemployed and spent most of his time on the streets. His parents had given up



***"I couldn't get a job.
Whenever I tried to do something good,
it was like I ran up against a brick wall."***

trying to get him back into school. His father had been laid off and the family had problems.

Paul remembers those days:

"I guess I just quit trying. I dropped out of school. I was failing anyway and I needed money. My folks were always on my back."

Paul came to the Harris County Youth Village eight months ago. The Village is an accredited school of the Houston Independent School District with a student-teacher ratio of one to 10.

With special attention and a lot of hard work, Paul has caught up to his grade level and his reading skills have improved dramatically. He enjoys vocational training, particularly his machine shop class.

In the Village Boy Scout troop, Paul has won respect from the other boys. Most important, he has come to respect himself.

Paul's parents visit on weekends. His father is working again and things are looking up for the family. They are proud of what Paul has accomplished, especially his change in attitude.

By earning good behavior credits, Paul will be considered for early release next month. What does he plan to do when he gets home?

"Well, I have to finish high school first. Then, I'm going to mechanics school." His face breaks into a big grin. "You know, man, I have to earn the money before I can buy that Indy 500 car."



"We try to give these kids a lot while they're here. We teach them they have positive alternatives in life and point out some options. But I guess the most important thing we can give a child is self-esteem. They simply have to respect themselves before they can respect others."

*— Janice Henderson
Child Care Worker*

Harris County Commissioners' Court

The Harris County Commissioners' Court provides more than fiscal support of juvenile probation programs. It promotes increasing existing services, community



Jon Lindsay,
Harris County Judge

"I can't think of a greater resource for the future than our children. As Chairman of the Juvenile Board, I'm proud to be part of a Department dedicated to improving the lives of young people in our community. As these children succeed, everyone benefits."



E.A. "Squatty" Lyons, Jr., Commissioner
Precinct Four

"I have been involved with the Juvenile Probation Department since its inception. It has pleased me immensely to see the growth and general improvement of all facets."

contracts, and improvements in residential facilities for the best possible services to Harris County youths and families.



El Franco Lee, Commissioner
Precinct One

"I am alarmed by the increase in crimes among youths in our community. I share the Probation Department's concern that troubled juveniles be directed early into productive lifestyles, thereby decreasing the number of serious offenses and preventing further involvement in the judicial and penal systems."

Jim Fonteno, Commissioner
Precinct Two

"My wife, JoAnn, and I raised seven children and we are thankful that each is a productive law-abiding citizen. But sometimes children go astray; they fall between the cracks of the family, school, and the church. That's where Juvenile Probation comes in. They help teach a child how to avoid the traps that lead to crime."

Bob Eckels, Commissioner,
Precinct Three

"A large percentage of the people we serve is our youth. The Juvenile Probation Department offers children a better outlook for today as well as an opportunity for a productive tomorrow. What better investment can we make in human resources?"

Harris County Juvenile Board

The Harris County Juvenile Board is the Department's governing body. Six district judges and the County Judge comprise the Board as mandated by state statute. The Board oversees the Department's overall operation and direction. It sets personnel and departmental policy, and approves and monitors programs and institutional services.

The Board completed several special projects during 1986. Billing procedures for collecting assessment fees on child support payments were approved by the Board, bringing in increased revenue to the County's General Fund. In



Judge Jon Lindsay
County Judge
Chairman

Judge William M. Hatten
176th District Court
Building and Grounds
Committee

Judge Robert B. Baum
314th District Court
Board Secretary
Program Committee
Tri-Board Committee

addition, the Board contracted with a private firm to study the Child Support Office for future planning.

After legal and programmatic review, the Board passed a resolution to transfer the control and responsibility of Chimney Rock Center from the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer to Children's Protective Services. Final approval came from the Commissioners' Court.

Due to a significant increase in Indochinese cases, the Board approved a contract with the Indochinese Culture Center for staff training, translation services and family, group and individual counseling sessions.



Judge Eric Andell
315th District Court
Program Committee

Judge Wyatt H. Heard
190th District Court

Judge Robert L. Lowry
313th District Court
Vice Chairman
Program Committee
Personnel Committee
Tri-Board Committee

Judge Bill Elliott
311th District Court

Intake Court Services

Intake Court Services, administered by Deputy Chief Bernard Hunter, handles all cases from the initial referral to the Department through the completion of the court process. It operates 24 hours daily.

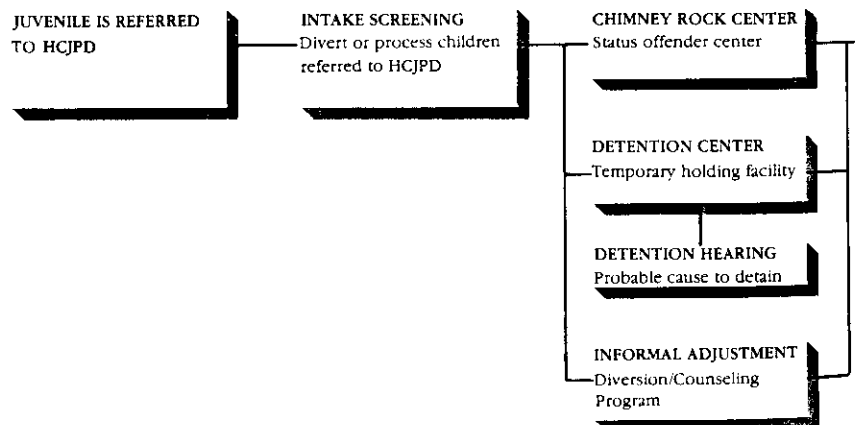
Deputy Chief Hunter serves as the Department's representative in TRIAD, a cooperative network of three county agencies: Harris County Children's Protective Services, Harris County Mental Health/Mental Retardation, and the Juvenile Probation Department.

Intake Screening

Intake Screening is the entry point into the juvenile justice system. Children are received predominantly from local law enforcement agencies. Here, each case is reviewed and a decision made as to the child's placement pending a court hearing. Information on the child's family and school situation, prior involvement with the Department, and immediate physical and emotional condition are evaluated.

To avoid unnecessary detention, the In-Custody Diversion Program concentrates on sending children home when appropriate. Special effort is made to locate parents and provide transportation for these children. Of the 5,136 children brought to the Detention Center last year, 654 were diverted through this program.

Case Flow Chart



Offense Per Referral, 1984-1986

	1984	1985	1986
Murder	32	23	16
Arson	59	55	73
Assault Felony	171	180	190
Misd A/B	26	57	60
Misd C	551	652	677
Sexual Assault	109	101	115
Robbery	184	209	241
Burglary	1418	1674	1813
Theft Felony	159	195	187
Misd A/B	1357	1555	1671
Misd C	932	1075	1168
Auto Theft	299	269	306
Joyriding	180	200	243
Drugs Felony	60	96	89
Misd A/B	530	645	506
Misd C	562	653	732
Inhalants	96	120	141
Alcohol Misd C	35	30	37
Other Felony	389	475	447
Misd A/B	1651	1927	2043
Disorderly Conduct	131	119	157
City Ordinance	190	200	198
Violation of Probation	324	351	372
Runaway* (CHINS)	5963	6016	7182
Other* (CHINS) Offense	174	872	1409
TYC Runaways	129	263	272
Administrative Actions	658	749	701
TOTAL	16369	18761	21046

*Children in need of supervision

Referral Source, 1986

Baytown Police Department	599
Harris County Sheriff Department	2761
Houston Police Department	13927
Pasadena Police Department	598
Other	3161
TOTAL	21046

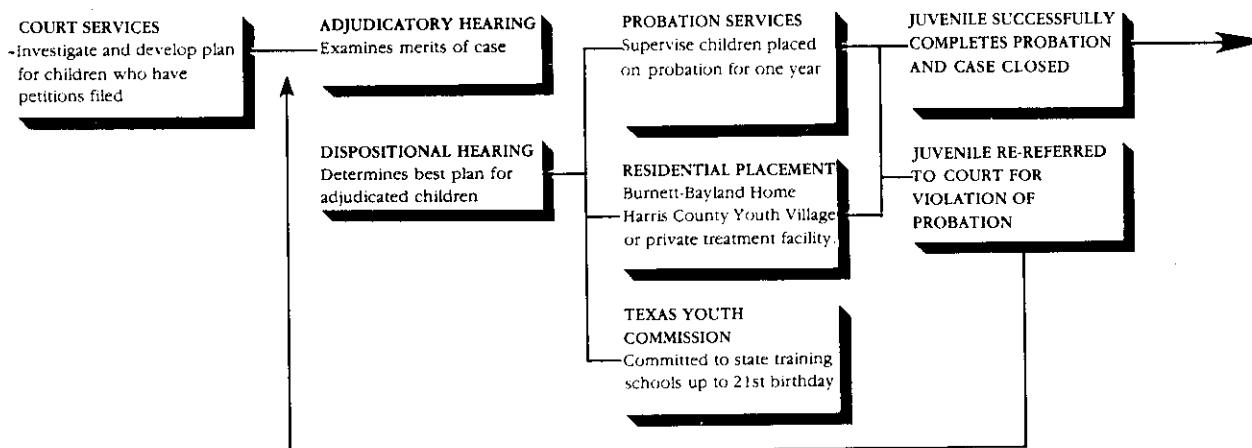
Type of Referrals 1986

Misd A/B 22.2%

Misd C/Less 16.2%

Felony 18.6%

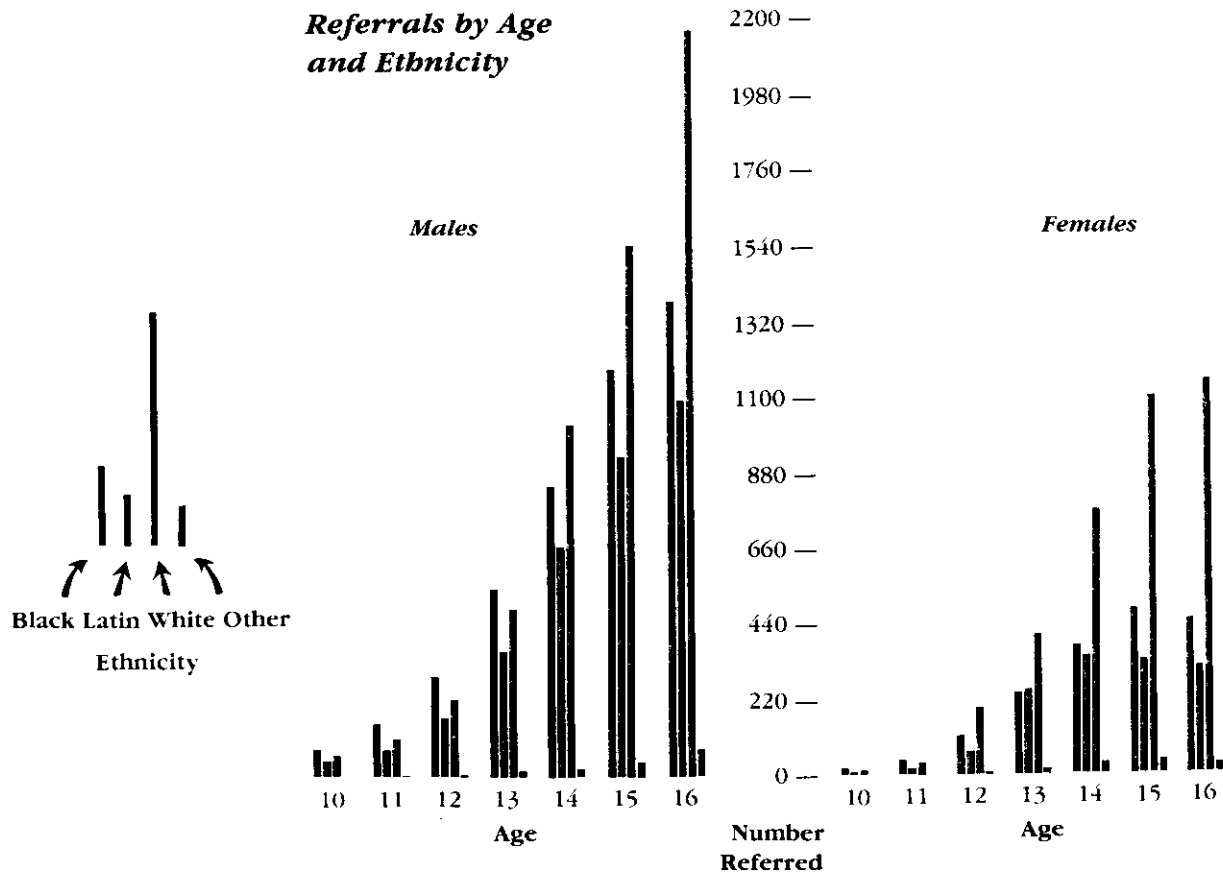
CHINS 43%



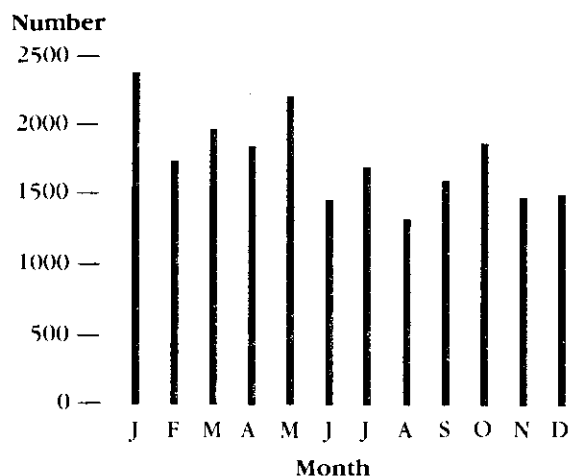
Referrals by School District and Ethnicity

	Black	Hispanic	Other	White	Total
Aldine	259	193	24	474	950
Alief	168	65	39	677	949
Channelview	8	24	7	110	149
Clear Creek	17	12	10	292	331
Crosby	15	2	0	74	91
Cypress	65	43	9	414	531
Deer Park	0	21	1	228	250
Galena Park	25	82	3	185	295
Goose Creek	103	116	0	380	599
Houston	4123	2770	115	1847	8855
Huffman	6	1	0	28	35
Humble	16	11	1	178	206
Katy	5	21	3	225	254
Klein	36	41	6	386	469
La Porte	6	12	0	120	138
North Forest	397	18	0	35	450
Pasadena	49	249	40	605	943
Sheldon	12	2	0	63	77
Spring	24	25	2	263	314
Spring Branch	108	188	28	592	916
Tomball	4	3	1	35	43
Stafford	1	0	0	0	1
Waller	0	1	0	1	2
Private/Parochial	88	125	6	325	544
Out of County	149	109	19	423	700
Not Available	698	706	64	1486	2954
TOTAL	6382	4840	378	9446	21046

Referrals by Age and Ethnicity



Number of Referrals, 1986



All status offenders, such as runaways and truants, are handled by Intake staff at Chimney Rock Center. Services include crisis intervention and short-term family counseling. Families in need of long-term assistance are referred to other community agencies.

Legal Screening

After the intake process is completed, cases are forwarded to Legal Screening to determine probable cause. Attorneys in this unit also serve as special prosecutors for the District Attorney's Office.

Court Services

The Court Services staff takes over after the District Attorney files a petition. A concise and detailed report is prepared for the judge's review in determining the child's disposition. If psychological, medical or other problems are suspected, the worker will request additional evaluations for the court report.

Court Activity, 1986

Disposition	
Probation	1814
Probation/Restitution	292
Informal Adjustment	186
Committed to Texas Youth Commission	353
Certified to Criminal Court	16
Passed — Writ Issued	68
Passed	176
Non-Suit	308
Dismissed	36
Incentive Completed	82
Other	514
TOTAL	3845

MH/MRA Activity, 1986

Referrals	522
Intakes	482
Psychologicals	330
Family	44
Psychiatric	330

Placement Services

At times, the judge may decide that residential placement outside the home is in the best interest of the child and the community. The Placement Services Unit researches and develops a list of appropriate residential facilities for the judge's consideration. Many types of facilities are available to meet each child's individual treatment needs.

In 1986, 429 children were placed outside their homes.

Placement Activity 1986

Facility	Number of Youth
The Answer.	3
Buckner Baptist.	1
Burnett-Bayland Home	76
DePelchin Faith Home	1
Edgemeade	6
Girlstown USA	5
Gulf Coast Trade Center.	46
Harris County Youth Village.	205
Hope Center for Youth.	18
Houston Marine Institute	17
Houston Achievement Place.	1
Lena Pope Home	3
Mary Lee Foundation	7
Meridell	2
Meadowbriar Home	3
Nacogdoches Boys Ranch.	5
New Horizons.	1
Odyssey Harbor	14
Vernon Drug Center	12
Youth Alternatives	3
TOTAL	429

Institutions

Three institutions, the Detention Center, Youth Village and Burnett-Bayland Home, are operated by the Juvenile Probation Department. Deputy Chief John A. Peters heads this Division. Each institution is administered by a director.

Detention Center

The Juvenile Detention Center is a secure, multi-purpose residential facility providing services to youths awaiting court disposition or other administrative action.

The Center was designed for programming small groups of children in a secure, non-threatening environment. Small, self-contained living units consist of ten single-occupancy rooms surrounding a multi-purpose activity center used for meals, education and small group activities. This assures a low staff-to-child ratio and individualized child care. Separate sections of the Center are equipped for medical and dental exams, psychological assessments, crisis intervention, recreation and education.

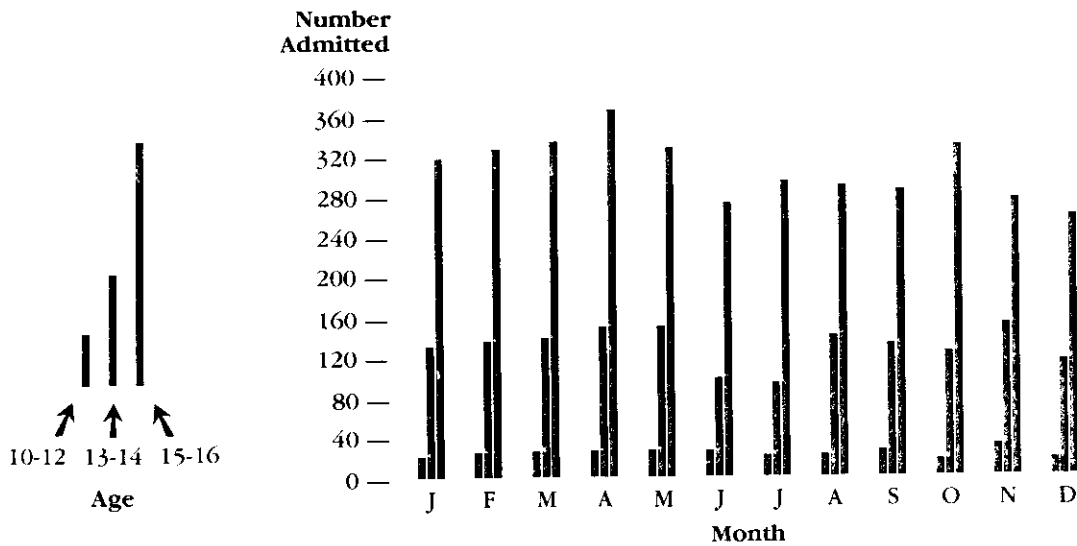
The Center has three gymnasiums, 13 multi-purpose activity rooms, family visitation rooms, a separate intake section and courtroom. State-of-the-art electronic monitoring system and innovative architectural features provide safety and security without bars.

Offense Per Admission, 1984-1986

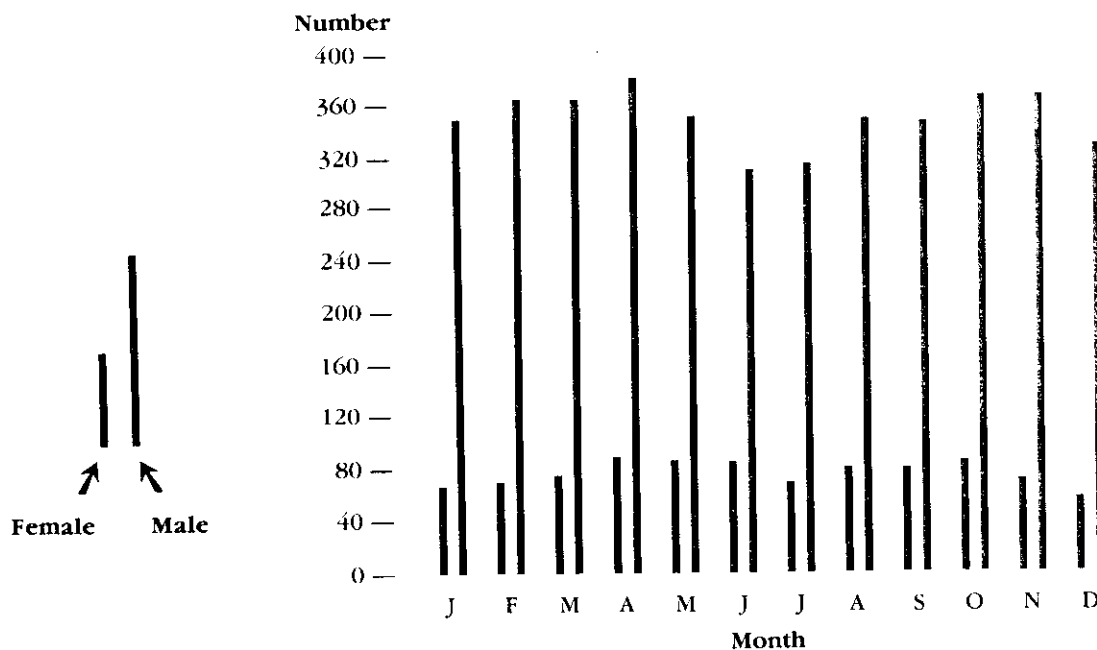
	1984	1985	1986
Murder	28	24	17
Arson	30	27	20
Assault			
Felony	132	121	130
Misd A/B	11	24	24
Misd C	189	169	186
Sexual Assault	61	66	76
Robbery	158	147	173
Burglary	731	875	974
Theft			
Felony	91	101	106
Misd A/B	545	514	531
Misd C	125	119	91
Auto Theft	213	195	219
Joyriding	114	119	178
Drugs			
Felony	52	72	54
Misd A/B	249	271	202
Misd C	190	174	183
Inhalants	44	49	70
Alcohol (Misd C)	12	16	13
Other			
Felony	172	191	211
Misd A/B	657	717	778
Disorderly Conduct	91	65	104
City Ordinance	46	40	41
Violation of Probation	163	172	185
Runaway (CHINS)*	577	578	494
Other (CHINS)* Offense	12	40	34
TYC Runaways	113	200	186
Administrative Actions	400	372	225
TOTAL	5206	5458	5505

*Children in need of supervision (status offense)

Admissions by Month and Age



Admissions by Sex—1986



On admission, each child resides in the Center's Assessment Unit. Here, the child is evaluated and a thorough physical and psychological assessment is made. This information is used to determine a temporary case plan and to assign the child to the most appropriate 10-bed living unit. Each incoming child receives orientation from the casework staff.

In accordance with the Texas Family Code, each child has a detention hear-

ing within two working days of admission and every 10 days thereafter. A court referee determines whether to detain or release each child. Hearings are held in the Center's courtroom. Only children who might harm themselves or others, or might not voluntarily return to court as ordered, are detained.

The Center's daily schedule includes individualized education, arts and crafts, movies, social and recreational activities, and voluntary religious services. Parent visitation is encouraged. Citizen volunteers and contracts with outside professionals enhance all aspects of Detention Center programming.

Burnett-Bayland Home

Burnett-Bayland Home is a community-based residential treatment center for delinquent children ages 10 to 17. Children who do not require secure confinement are placed here by court order for up to one year.

Each child undergoes an evaluation process to determine an individualized treatment plan. Residents attend public schools, participate in community activities and spend many weekends at home. Community involvement is an important aspect of the treatment program linking citizen volunteers and organizations with the Home's staff. Various community agencies provide contract services to supplement staff efforts.

A three-tier level system is an integral part of the program, encouraging a child to succeed through positive rewards and increased responsibility. As the child succeeds, pride and self esteem develop. Group, family and individual counseling continue to be key elements of the treatment program.

Parent and sibling involvement is considered critical for a smoother transition and greater chance of success when the child returns home. Parents attend monthly meetings for group support and to learn new parenting skills. Family visitation is always encouraged.

Every staff member is considered part of Burnett-Bayland Home's treatment team. The 37 child care workers, caseworkers, administrators and ancillary staff work together with community volunteers to help the child and family.

In 1986, 118 boys were in residence at Burnett-Bayland. The racial breakdown was 35% white, 45% black and 20% Hispanic.

Harris County Youth Village

The Harris County Youth Village is a residential child care facility on a lake-front campus in the Clear Lake area. Delinquent youths, ages 10 to 17, receive a wide range of educational and therapeutic services.

All children are placed at the Village by court order for up to one year. Upon admission, each child undergoes an observation and assessment process. The trained staff evaluates educational, social and psychological functioning. The child's health, attitude, and family situation help determine an individualized treatment plan.

Most programming takes place on campus. Recreational facilities include a swimming pool, tennis courts, gymnasium, ball fields, and basketball courts. Routine medical services and examinations are provided by two registered nurses. Indoor activities include arts and crafts and table games.

The Youth Village is an accredited school in the Houston Independent School District. It offers a full curriculum of academic and vocational classes, athletics, guidance counseling, remedial and special education. School attendance is mandatory and accelerated. Most residents enter with school problems and some gain as many as three grade levels during their stay.

A Positive Monetary Release System encourages responsibility and achievement. Residents earn hypothetical dollar credits for good behavior, some of which may be spent on treats or privileges. The rest is "banked" and the child is considered for release when the account reaches \$25,000 credit.

All staff participate in the comprehensive treatment plan. Volunteers assist staff and sponsor special programs and activities.

In 1986, the Youth Village served 316 residents. The average daily population was 120 with an average length of stay of 8.8 months. The racial breakdown was 39% black, 27% white and 34% Hispanic. The sex ratio was 79% male and 21% female.

Probation Field Services

The Probation Field Services Division, under the direction of Deputy Chief Teresa V. Ramirez, provides probation and informal adjustment services. The primary goal is to redirect children from negative to positive, responsible behavior through innovative and therapeutic programs.

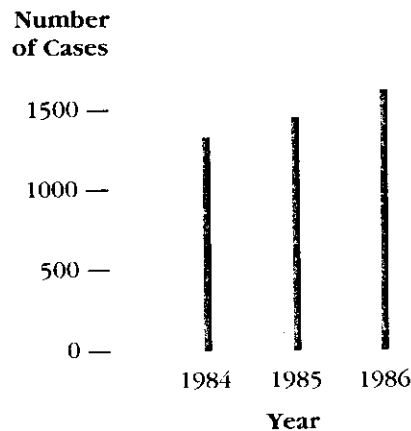
Field Service Programs

<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Educational Workshops	Workshops for youths and families on parenting, drug abuse, self-esteem, etc.	5,083 youths and families
Y.E.E.S.	Tutorial, remedial, pre-employment training and G.E.D. preparation	361 youths with 3,412 hours
Therapeutic Counseling	By Houston Child Guidance, Hope Center, Chicano Family Center, Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans (AAMA), Jackson and Associates.	384 individual, 412 group and 480 family hours
Legal Awareness Workshop (L.A.W.)	Attorneys, judges, and other professionals present information on the law.	1,008 youths and parents
Peer Pressure Workshop	Presentation by Houston Police Department on negative effects of peer pressure.	599 youths and parents
Peer Counseling	Parent and youth peer group counseling	504 group hours
Parent Training Program	AAMA provides bilingual counselors for workshops on parenting skills.	332 workshop hours
R.O.P.E.S.	Problem-solving experience through physically and emotionally demanding activities by West Oaks Hospital.	328 youths
Vision Screening Program	University of Houston provided screening for vision impairment; glasses provided.	308 youths screened, 50 follow-up exams
Restitution (Community services)	American Red Cross places youths in non-profit agencies as volunteers.	304 youths
Restitution (Financial)	Offender repays victim	270 court ordered totaling \$42,152.00
Prohibited Weapons Workshop	Houston Police Department teaches consequences of unlawful weapons.	282 youths and parents
Incentive Program	A voluntary program that may shorten probation time.	227 youths
TDC Outreach - Central Unit at Sugar Land.	Texas Department of Corrections shows harsh realities of prison life	170 youths attended
Inhalant Abuse	Therapy and education for substance abusers and families with AAMA and Chicano Family Center	47 youths
Boys Club of America	Educational and recreational activities	19 youths
Other programs	Art therapy, silk screening classes, art exhibitions, and modeling experience.	

Field Services

Probation Services provides up to one year of supervision to delinquent children placed on probation by the courts. In 1986, 2,106 cases were assigned to five field probation units located throughout Harris County and staffed by 27 juvenile probation officers. Twenty-seven percent of the cases assigned to Field Services involved administrative change-of-custody.

Probation Cases, 1984-1986



Probation Services addresses the needs of both the child and family through therapeutic intervention, supervision, counseling and education. Probation officers review each case and involve the child and family in an individual casework plan for their needs. Community agencies, volunteers and other community resources are used to enhance the probation officer's treatment plan.

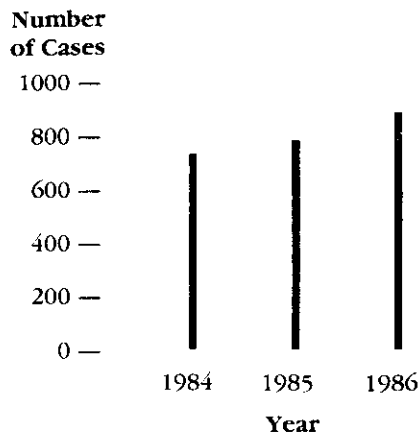
The number of new cases assigned to Field Services in 1986 was 1,537. The average field unit caseload was 307, with an average probation officer caseload of 57 children.

Informal Adjustment

The Informal Adjustment Program diverts children from involvement in the juvenile justice system through six months of supervision, counseling and specialized programs. While some children are referred by court order, most voluntarily agree to participate in this six-month program. They are usually young, non-violent, first offenders. Successful completion of the program is intended to prevent future unlawful behavior, and to spare the child a juvenile record and involvement in the juvenile justice system.

In 1986, 876 new assignments were made to the Informal Adjustment Program. The average probation officer caseload was 109 children.

Informal Adjustment Cases, 1984-1986



Carefully screened and trained volunteers and student interns assist staff with counseling and group activities. In 1986, 9,229 service hours were provided to children and their families by Field Services volunteers and interns.

Administrative Services

The Administrative Services Division, under the direction of Deputy Chief Emily Charney, administers the Department's Research and Systems Development Unit and Family Court Services.

This Division includes the Department's liaison with the Harris County Commissioners' Court, the State Legislature, and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. Also within this Division is the Public Information Office, which is responsible for community and media relations.

Family Court Services

Family Court Services investigates and prepares social histories in adoption and disputed child custody cases for the district courts. Investigators provide the courts with a comprehensive report containing information gathered from home visits, contact with relatives, schools and other relevant sources. This report assists the judge in determining whether an adoption should be granted, or which parent should receive custody when a divorce is granted.

In 1986, Family Court Services handled 670 child custody cases and 730

adoption cases. While most children remain at home during this process, 27 stayed in residential placement pending the court's decision.

Research and Systems Development

The primary goal of the Research and Systems Development Unit is to provide accurate and useful information to Department staff.

This unit is the central data source for automated and manual juvenile records. Information for tracking the activity of each case is set up in the county's mainframe computer. Systems Development staff trains employees throughout the Department to update case information and works closely with county programmers to enhance the system.

Research staff provides data on the children and services of the Department, prepares statistical reports and graphics for other agencies and funding sources, and prepares and monitors the Department's grant awards. Training staff on the word processing system is another function of this unit.

In 1986, microcomputers were introduced in key areas of the agency where services do not require the child tracking system, such as the Personnel and Training Units. Research and Systems staff will provide programming, training and support services in 1987 for micro systems throughout the Department.

Ancillary Services

Various units within the Department provide support to enhance our programs and upgrade staff skills.

Personnel Unit

The Personnel Unit is responsible for posting open positions, processing employment applications, coordinating screening records, maintaining personnel records for the 468 staff and ensuring that all county personnel guidelines are followed throughout the Department.

In 1986, the Personnel Unit received 3,428 applications for 104 open positions. In addition, the unit interviewed 742 applicants.

Training and Staff Development

The Training and Staff Development Unit provides in-service training workshops and seminars to enhance staff professionalism and to meet the state's requirements for probation officer certification requiring 40 hours of training per year.

In 1986, 170 training sessions included topics such as drug abuse, depression, nutrition, delinquency, and using community resources. A total of 1,475 training hours gave staff the opportunity to select topics that fit their specific job needs.

Training is adjusted for the changing needs of the Department. In 1986, an increase in Indochinese cases resulted in training sessions on their culture and behavior.

A contract with Sam Houston State University's Training Academy provides additional opportunities for all levels of staff to upgrade skills and expand areas of specialization.

The Training and Staff Development Unit is also responsible for the **Juvenile Alcohol Awareness Program**. The first of its kind in the country, this is a combined effort of the Juvenile Probation Department and the Houston Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. During 1986, some 500 teens and parents learned about alcohol and drugs, peer pressure, self-esteem, communication, decision making and the effects of substance abuse on the family. This six-week course is offered at three locations in the county.

Interns

Thirteen colleges and universities participated in the Department's Intern Program. Every area of the Department provides supervised on-the-job-training for undergraduate and graduate students. During 1986, 58 students participated in either a semester or year-long program. Students are from Grambling State University, Houston Baptist University, Lamar University, Prairie View A & M University, Sam Houston State University, Southwest Texas State University, Stephen F. Austin University, Texas A & M University, Texas Women's University, University of Houston System, and University of St. Thomas.

Volunteers

Volunteers add a special dimension of caring, friendship, and support to our children. More than 420 trained volunteers provided 67,170 service hours to enhance the quality of our programs.

The Juvenile Court Volunteers, a non-profit United Way agency, specializes in one-on-one programs for children in our institutions and on probation. This year, another new and successful program in the Detention Center was implemented. Volunteers, in conjunction with Houston Independent School District personnel, provided individual tutoring.

In 1986, 1,543 children benefited through the efforts of 246 Juvenile Court Volunteers.

The Junior League of Houston is another invaluable volunteer organization involved with probationers. These volunteers work closely with probation officers and assist with individual counseling and casework.

Throughout 1986, 90 Junior League Volunteers provided over 8,300 hours of service in working with our young offenders.

The donation of professional services by citizen volunteers in 1986 was valued at a cost equivalent of over \$780,000 if those services had been purchased. All volunteers are carefully screened and trained.

Child Support

The Harris County Child Support Office, located in the Family Law Center, receives and disburses court-ordered child support payments. Approximately \$68,000,000 was collected and disbursed in 1986.

Incoming support checks are recorded and mailed out the next business day. This office also maintains payment records for court use. The number of cases handled by the Child Support Office has dramatically increased over the past 10 years. In 1976, approximately 19,000 cases were handled, compared to 134,000 cases in 1986.

To improve service, an audio response inquiry system was installed to provide instant, around-the-clock information to clients on their payment status.

In addition, the Child Support Office processes some court-ordered parent contributions for residential placements and restitution payments by juveniles.


Funding

The Probation Department operated with a combined 1986 budget of \$19,539,947. Funding came from three sources: Harris County Commissioners' Court, Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office.

The largest share of the budget came through the Harris County Commissioners' Court. A total of \$17,507,872 in county funds and \$58,604 in Federal Revenue Sharing funds was allocated and monitored by the Commissioners' Court. This paid for most salaries and benefits, facility maintenance, daily operation, youth services and placements.

Services were supplemented by funds from the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. In 1986, the Department received \$1,192,080 from the Commission for direct youth services, personnel and staff training.

Two grants were funded by the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office totaling \$781,391. The \$708,935 Purchase of Services grant was for private placements, individual, group and family counseling contracts, translation services, psychological assessments, supplementary educational services and emergency transportation of runaways. The Detention Center Staffing Grant of \$72,456, provided 20 percent funding of 10 staff positions in the Detention Center.


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The staff, children and families who allowed us to share their stories.

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Sue Suber *Director, Family Court Services*

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Field Services

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Ronald Niksich *Director, Youth Village*

Robert Waller *Director, Burnett-Bayland Home*

Ancillary Services

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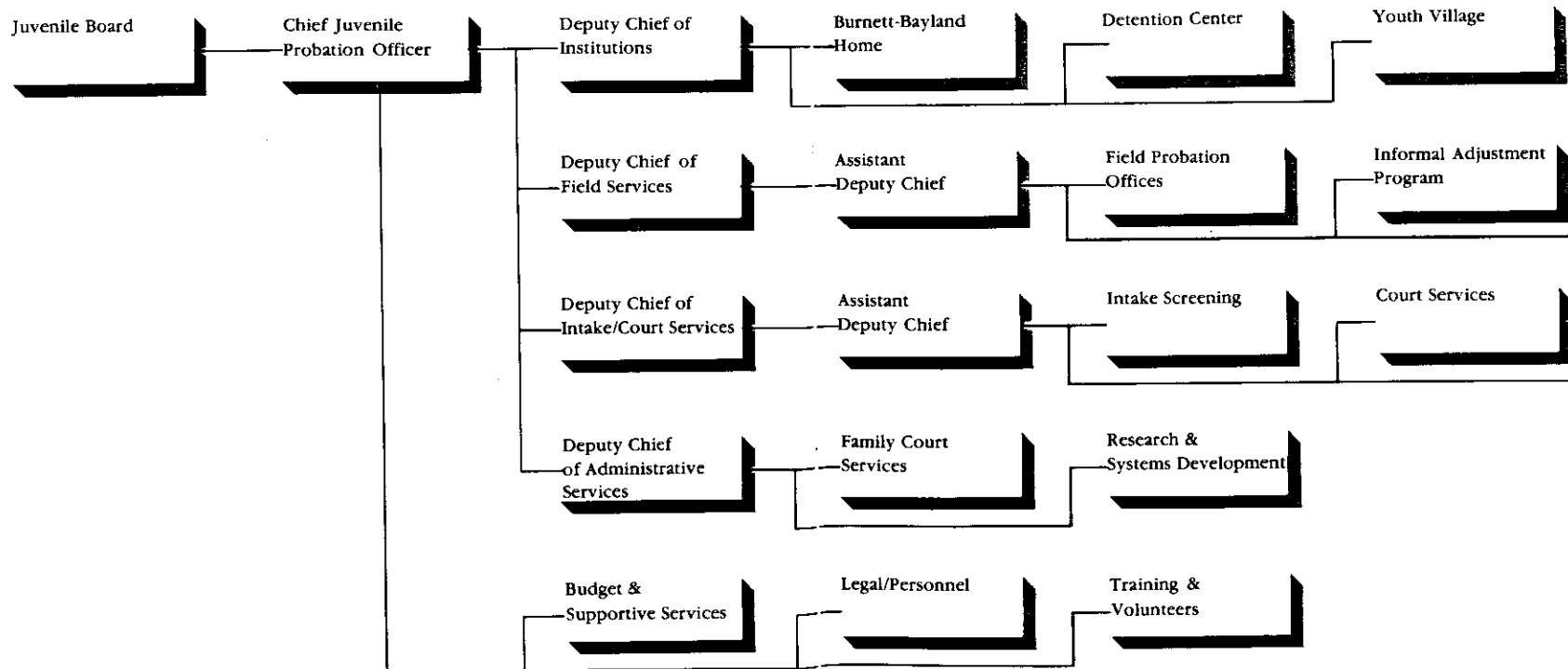
JoAnn Jones *Administrator, Training & Volunteers*

Veronica Morgan-Price *Referee, Juvenile Court*

Sam Van Rheen *Director, Child Welfare Services*

Organization Chart 1986

Harris County Juvenile Probation Department



Harris County Juvenile Probation Department
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